



# Vernon Area Cable Advisory Council

## VERNON AREA CABLE ADVISORY COUNCIL Minutes of Meeting dated October 4, 2017

Community Voice Channel Conference Room  
105 Notch Road  
Bolton, Connecticut

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Attending Members: Paul Batterson, Tolland Representative; Elaine Buchardt, Andover; Justin Waine, Ellington; Larry Perosino, Tolland Representative

Attending Guests: Nick Lavigne, CVC Executive Director; Matt Skane, Manager Government & Regulatory Affairs for Comcast

1. **Call to Order. Review of last meeting.** Paul Batterson called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. in the Community Voice Channel Meeting Room. Elaine Buchardt made a motion to approve the June 15, 2017 meeting minutes, seconded by Paul Batterson. The motion was unanimously approved.
2. **Comcast Report** – Matt Skane, the new Comcast representative introduced himself. A former elder law attorney, he said he came on board with Comcast in July.

He discussed the ongoing Internet Essentials program for low-income children and families and noted that Comcast has recently launched a similar pilot program for elderly low-income people. For now, the launch is limited to Hartford only in this area. He also informed the VACAC about Comcast's Hurricane Relief efforts. He said Comcast is providing free wifi in certain hotspots in Georgia, Florida and the Carolinas. He also provided a sheet on programming notes on PURA.

The VACAC discussed the frequency that Matt Skane would be attending VACAC meetings. It is Comcast's policy that he attend just two meetings a year, but he said he would also be willing to participate in a conference call if needed. As he is new to the cable industry, he asked that if there are any questions or complaints, that members bring it to his attention as soon as possible and he will get the question into the right person's hands to resolve issues quickly.

Matt Skane was asked if West Hartford is the closest Comcast location for dropping off or exchanging equipment. He said it is. He said the focus has been on moving toward utilizing the XFINITY stores.

Larry Perosino asked about sports and entertainment packages and the regional sports fees. It was noted that Comcast was able to get the Yes Network back in their offerings, but also lost three FOX sports channels. Matt Skane said the regional sports fees go toward programming fees, and what Comcast offers with regard to programming is sometimes beyond their control. Comcast is always negotiating for programming, but sometimes negotiations don't always go as hoped for.

Paul Batterson asked why families whose children qualify for the free meals program but who already have internet service cannot take advantage of the reduced Internet Essentials pricing for internet

service. Matt Skane said Comcast is focusing on people who have not been able to afford the services, and so do not offer it to people who have already made internet service a priority in their life.

Matt Skane discussed Comcast's Xfinity Mobile Launch. Comcast uses Verizon's wireless network. Currently, customers can only subscribe to the Xfinity Mobile plan if they already pay for Xfinity TV and Internet.

3. **CVC Report** – Nick Lavigne said the focus right now is on the November 11 CVC Gala to be held at the Ellington Ridge Country Club on Saturday evening, November 11 from 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The VACAC has already purchased a table for ten attendees. Nick said he'd like to find out who plans to attend. Larry Perosino and Justin Waine said they could not make it, and Elaine Buchardt said she was already provided a pair of free tickets because she made a donation to the auction. The VACAC discussed who they could give their tickets to if less than ten people attend. Nick Lavigne said ticket sales are going well and they have sold more than half the tickets available.

Nick Lavigne said the CVC will be getting natural gas lines this month to replace their current propane tanks. There will be some associated costs with this installation. He said the CVC also plans to have their meet and greet with Santa event on the first Monday in December.

Larry Perosino noted that in the last meeting's minutes, Nick Lavigne had said they will need to tap into the reserve funds for the HD installation. He asked what was in the balance of the reserve fund. Nick Lavigne estimated there is about \$30,000 presently in the reserve for capital expenses and while they do plan to use a large portion of it, they also are getting donations and doing fundraising to help offset the expense.

4. **Treasurer's Report** – Paul Batterson distributed the latest report with the usual expenses. The report also showed the \$600 expense for the purchase of ten tickets for the November Gala. The current balance in the account is \$3,486.63.
5. **Other Matters** – Larry Perosino asked Matt Skane if there has been any talk at Comcast about offering ala carte programming options. Matt Skane said this usually leads to a massive price increase to the consumer, so it is simply not practical.
6. **Future meetings** – The VACAC discussed whether they should reduce their number of meetings to two per year. There was agreement to do so, with an openness to call a meeting if an issue arises that makes an additional meeting necessary. The next scheduled meeting was set for Wednesday, March 21, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile  
Recording Secretary